

Honoring Our Veterans

With nearly 22 million veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces living among us, it's likely one or more of these American heroes is a family member or a close friend. Though these men and women deserve our recognition and thanks every day, November 11 is Veterans Day, the official day that we recognize our veterans and their service to our country.

For many years, Girl Scouts have shown appreciation for our military men and women with Operation: Sweet Appreciation, which is a part of the annual product sales of Girl Scout Cookies and nuts and candies. In addition, Girl Scouts also send sweet treats to local food pantries, shelters, hospitals, and other organizations through the Gift of Caring program. These are some of the ways that Girl Scouts show their appreciation to our veterans. There are many other ways to show appreciation to our veterans who are on active duty, have retired, or have passed.

How to earn the Honoring Our Veterans patch the Girl Scout way:

Steps:

- 1. Discover**—Learn about the different branches of the military and what it means to be a veteran.
- 2. Connect**—Learn more about minority groups whose contributions to the military were often overlooked.
- 3. Take Action**—Honor a veteran by decorating their grave site or sending a card.

Materials Needed:

In order to complete this patch, you'll need a few things:

- Resources (With an adult, you can either go online or visit a library or bookstore.)
- Craft supplies (See Step 2.) Materials for the suggested craft are popsicle sticks, glue, and red, white, and blue paint or markers.

Step 1

Discover the different branches of military and veterans. (Choose two.)

1. List the five branches of the military. Learn at least two facts about each branch.
2. What is a veteran? Learn about a veteran's organization in your area and what they do.
3. Interview a veteran about their service. Start with questions like:
 - For which branch of service did you serve?
 - What was your rank?
 - Where did you serve?
 - If you served in a war, which one?
 - Were you drafted or did you enlist?
 - Why did you join?
 - How did you stay in touch with your family?
 - What was the food like?
 - Did you have plenty of supplies?
 - Did you have another career before or after the military?
 - Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?



Step 2

Learn more about minority groups whose contributions to the military were often overlooked.

Throughout history, minority groups have made amazing and incredible contributions to the military. Until recently, the stories of these unsung heroes were often overlooked. Below are several links to websites and videos featuring historical accounts of minority groups who made major contributions to the United State Armed Forces. Pick TWO of the minority groups below and learn 3-5 interesting facts about their contributions to the military, the barriers they broke, and how they paved the way for ALL of those who enlist today.

- **Tuskegee Airmen**—Pioneers of Black Aviation: <https://www.history.com/news/the-birth-of-the-tuskegee-airmen>
- **6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion**—Boosting the Morale of Millions of U.S. Soldiers during WWII: <https://www.history.com/news/black-woman-army-unit-mail-world-war-ii>
- **The 54th Massachusetts Infantry**—Abe Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation opened the door for freed slaves to join Union forces during the Civil War: <https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/the-54th-massachusetts-infantry>
- **Black Nurses in WWII**—Caring for German Prisoners of War: <https://www.history.com/news/black-nurses-world-war-ii-truman-desegregation-military>
- **Native American Code Talkers**—How Language Confused the Enemy in WWI and WWII: <https://www.history.com/news/world-war-is-native-american-code-talkers>
- **Nisei Linguists**—Japanese American Linguists Became America's Secret Weapon During WWII: <https://www.history.com/news/wwii-japanese-linguists-nisei-internment-camps-plan-z>
- **Rosie the Riveter**—An American Female Icon Who Changed the Workforce During WWII: <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/rosie-the-riveter>
- **Black Rosie the Riveters**—The Forgotten African American Heroines of the WWII Homefront: <https://www.history.com/news/black-rosie-the-riveters-wwii-homefront-great-migration>
- **Asian-American Women**—Making Their Mark on WWII: <https://www.history.com/news/asian-american-women-wwii-contributions>
- Do some digging and find some more unsung minority military heroes and share them with us to include in future patch programs.

Step 3

Honor a veteran. (Choose one.)

- Work with your local VFW or American Legion to lay wreaths, etc. on veterans' gravesites at Christmas, or flags for Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, or Independence Day.
- Volunteer with a local organization that serves veterans.
- Send a card or letter to an organization that serves veterans over a holiday or anytime during the year. (Every year, the American Red Cross collects signed or handmade holiday cards from individuals and organizations. Girl Scouts are invited to join in the fun and make or sign cards that will be distributed to Pennsylvania veterans this December. Choose an appropriate card and message. Avoid cards with excessive amounts of glitter. Do not include cash or gift cards. Envelopes are not needed. Keep messages heartfelt and sincere, but appropriate for all audiences. Consider including a note of thanks, a personal message, or a wish for a joyous holiday season! For more information, contact the local American Red Cross Holidays for Heroes Team at 814-460-9622 or email mary.rogers@redcross.org.)

All done? CONGRATULATIONS!

You've completed all the necessary steps to earn the Honoring Our Veterans patch.

After completing the activities from each step, visit or call a Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania retail shop at 800-248-3355 to purchase your patch.* A patch may be worn on the back of a vest, sash or tunic.

*Patch shown may be substituted with similar patch, based on availability.